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ABSTRACT

This unit explores Virginia society between 1640 and 1680. By examining copies of original documents, students study the causes of Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. Although the rebellion was a failure, understanding the reasons for the conflict gives insight into colonial Virginia. Students learn that Virginia was initially a predominantly male society of fortune hunters, who, when gold was not discovered, settled on tobacco as the quickest and surest way to riches. It was a highly stratified society with large numbers of indentured servants. In part, Bacon's Rebellion reflected the lower orders' resentment at their place in this hierarchical society. Additionally, the unit shows how the thirst for land fueled a hatred of American Indians and led to the indiscriminate assault on both friendly and hostile tribes. Finally, the unit gives insight into why the Southern colonies shifted from white bound labor to black slave labor. Elementary school children should understand that the regional differences that continue to influence our nation began in colonial America. Studying Bacon's Rebellion helps students understand colonial Virginia and the ways in which it was distinct from New England and the Middle colonies. A study of Bacon's Rebellion helps students understand that there were choices in the way white and Indian cultures interacted. One of the central issues of the rebellion was the struggle over the way Indians should be treated. The systematic extermination of Indian groups and the destruction of their cultures was not inevitable. This unit helps explain, but not excuse, the choice the white settlers of Virginia made.
(Author/DK)

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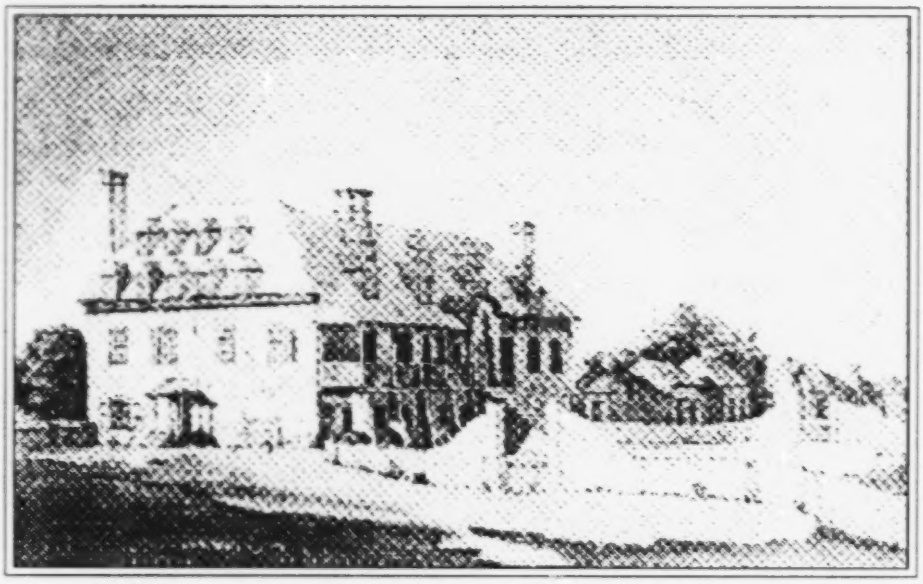
BACON'S REBELLION

A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADE 5-8

By Kent Lewis
&
Jim Pearson



A Latrobe watercolor of Green Spring

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
A Cooperative Research Program of the
University of California, Los Angeles,
and the National Endowment for the Humanities

Gary B. Nash, Associate Director& Historical Consultant
Linda Symcox, Project Developer & Series Editor
Charlotte Crabtree, Director

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For information on additional teaching units and other resources from the Center, please write:

National Center for History in the Schools
University of California, Los Angeles
Moore Hall 231, 405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1521

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

By Linda Symcox

The National Center for History in the Schools has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching **Bacon's Rebellion**. Our units are the fruit of a year-long collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. They represent specific "**dramatic moments**" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

In our approach, the continuing narrative provides the context in which the dramatic moment is situated. By studying a crucial turning-point in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our dramatic moments are based on **primary sources**, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. As you know, a primary source is a **first-hand** account of any event in history. For example, the telecast or the script of a speech would be a primary source. A secondary source is a **second-hand** account of an event. This would be, for example, the newspaper account of the speech the next day or a newscaster's report about the speech. All historical accounts, such as textbooks, are by their very

nature secondary sources. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to re-create for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

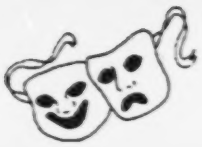
Within this unit, you will find: 1) **Teacher Background Materials** and 2) **Lesson Plans** with **Student Resources**. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. We have chosen to pitch the various lessons on different grade levels and they can usually be adapted to a slightly higher or lower level.

The **Teacher Background** section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The **Lesson Plans** include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or

cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. These resources consist of primary source documents, any hand-outs or student background materials, and in many cases, a bibliography for the unit.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction, rather than rote memorization.



THE REVOLT OF 1676

On September 19, 1676, Governor Berkeley of Virginia, still vigorous despite his nearly seventy years, felt alone and afraid as he stared at the petition his officers had presented urging that they abandon Jamestown. The Governor's men, badly outnumbered and unsure of their own cause, wanted to retreat. Yet to give up Jamestown, the capital and largest town of the colony, to the young traitor Nathaniel Bacon, and his rag tag army of rabble, might mean the loss of Virginia as a colony. Armed ships were on the way from England, but his own men had no stomach to fight Bacon or his army.

Nathaniel Bacon had been in Virginia for less than three years but had become a hero to many of the colony's poor freemen. Not that Bacon himself was poor—far from it. He was the son of a wealthy English gentleman who, having tired of his son's extravagant and reckless antics, shipped him to Virginia with enough money to establish a large tobacco plantation. In Virginia, Bacon was welcomed by the Governor, his cousin by marriage, and the other rich planters of the colony. His wealth, high birth, and ability to speak persuasively led Governor Berkeley to appoint him to the council of state less than a year after his arrival. But Bacon's popularity among the poor and common people of Virginia was not due to his rank, but because he was an outspoken enemy to all Indians. The captured Indians he paraded in front of the barricades surrounding Jamestown the day before were a reminder to the loyalists of what had caused the rebellion. Although he was attacking the capital, he had frequently insisted that his only intention was to protect the frontier regions from the threat of Indians.

Reluctantly, the Governor accepted the pleas of his officers and troops. He ordered his men onto the ships in

the harbor. That night, Berkeley's men in their ships on the James River watched their capital, the first permanent English settlement in the New World, being burned and utterly destroyed. Just over a month after this night, Bacon would die of what was then called bloody flux (dysentery). The loss of their charismatic leader led to the rapid collapse of the rebellion.

I. UNIT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

This unit explores Virginia society between 1640 and 1680. By examining copies of original documents, students will study the causes of Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. Although the rebellion was a failure, understanding the reasons for the conflict gives insight into colonial Virginia. Students will learn that Virginia was initially a predominantly male society of fortune hunters, who, when gold was not discovered, settled on tobacco as the quickest and surest way to riches. It was a highly stratified society with large numbers of indentured servants. In part, Bacon's Rebellion reflected the lower orders' resentment at their place in this hierarchical society. The unit will also show how the thirst for land fueled a hatred of American Indians and led to the indiscriminate assault on both friendly and hostile tribes. Finally, the unit gives insight into why the Southern colonies shifted from white bound labor to black slave labor.

Elementary school children should understand that the regional differences which continue to influence our nation began in colonial America. Studying Bacon's Rebellion will help students understand colonial Virginia and the ways in which it was distinct from New England and the Middle colonies. The families and cooperative community values that marked the New England colonies were only weakly present in Virginia.

A study of Bacon's Rebellion will also help students understand that there were choices in the way white and Indian cultures interacted. One of the central issues of Bacon's Rebellion was the struggle over the way Indians should be treated. The systematic extermination of Indian groups and the destruction of their cultures was not inevitable. This unit will help explain, but not excuse, the choice the white settlers of Virginia made. Additionally,

this unit suggests part of the reason African slaves eventually replaced English and Irish bonded servants as the primary labor force in the Southern colonies. The rebellion revealed the drawback of relying on a labor force based on bonded servants. Such servitude fostered resentment which masters could only control while the laborers were in service. Once servants became freemen, planters were no longer able to compel subservience; indeed, former servants competed with planters for land and labor. Finally, studying the struggle between Bacon and Berkeley, neither of whom was particularly admirable, allows children to grapple with the possibility that sometimes neither side in a contest is endowed with particular virtue.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit on Bacon's Rebellion should be taught after units on American Indians, European exploration, Jamestown's founding and the Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. On the basis of earlier lessons and the completion of this one, students should be able to compare and contrast New England colonies with southern colonies like Virginia. This unit also anticipates and partially prepares students for later study of Indian-white relations, westward expansion, slavery, and the Revolutionary War. When studying these areas teachers should draw on what students learned while studying Bacon's Rebellion to reinforce and enhance their understanding.

III. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To study historical documents, in order to experience history as a dynamic discipline which studies, interprets, and debates the meaning of human artifacts and, through those remnants, humanity's collective past.

2. To explain what an indentured servant was and contrast indentured servitude with slavery.

3. To contrast gentlemen and freemen, noting the legal distinctions between them.

4. To explain the social and legal status of slaves, servants, freemen, and gentlemen; as well as the subordinate legal status of women.

5. To examine the American Indians' inferior status in the colonists' legal system.

6. To explain the attitude of colonists like Nathaniel Bacon toward American Indians and how their attitudes differed from colonists like Governor Berkeley.

7. To make reasonable speculations about how the different orders of Virginia society felt about their respective conditions.

8. To speculate about why planters would want slaves instead of bound or free labor.

IV. INTRODUCTION TO BACON'S REBELLION

In 1675 and 1676, the Jamestown colony was torn by conflict. War between American Indians and colonists led to civil war within the colony. Since 1646 a treaty which gave the Powhatan Indians exclusive rights to land north of the York River had kept relations between the Indians and Virginians calm. The established settlers and Governor Berkeley, who controlled the Indian trade, wanted to maintain good relations with Indians and avoid conflict. But new settlers and white indentured servants who had served their time, were hungry for Indian land. In the summer of 1675 a group of frontiersmen found an excuse to attack the Susquehannocks, whose land they coveted. Although the governor tried to keep peace, few settlers supported him and both sides prepared for war. Militarily weak but feeling wronged and wanting revenge, the Susquehannocks attacked during the winter of 1675-1676, killing thirty-six Virginians. That spring, the frontiersmen, led by Nathaniel Bacon, launched a campaign of indiscriminate warfare against friendly and unfriendly Indians. Ignoring the frontiersmen's petitions for support and infuriated by their blatant disregard of his order to desist, the governor sent 300 militiamen to bring Bacon to Jamestown. Bacon's war on the American Indians had become civil war.

Virginians rebelled for various reasons: class resentment, desire for personal gain, hatred of Indians, and anger with the governor's rule. Although Berkeley had raised taxes and limited the authority of local officials, it was conciliatory Indian policy which provoked the insurrection. The rebellion achieved initial success, probably drawing the support of the majority of colonists. Continuing to attack Indians indiscriminately, rebels also out-maneuvered Berkeley's troops, capturing and burning Jamestown, the capital. But the rebellion fizzled as

rapidly as it had begun. As the Indians were subdued, rebels drifted back to their farms. Bacon's death by dysentery drained the rebellion of its remaining momentum. The arrival of 1,100 troops from England in January 1678 sealed the end of the revolt.

Besides marking the point when unrelenting persecution of American Indians became standard practice among colonists, Bacon's Rebellion helps explain why enslaved African laborers ultimately supplanted white bonded servants as the primary labor force in the Southern colonies. In the early days of settlement bonded servants were the preferred source of labor. Servants brought to Virginia allowed planters to reap a double benefit: not only did planters get several years' worth of cheap labor, but they were given fifty acres for each new settler they brought to Virginia. Both bonded servants and slaves initially had very high mortality rates. Since servants were cheaper than slaves and both were likely to die within a few years of arrival, servants were the better bargain. But eventually, as people learned to survive in this new land, servants began to live long enough to achieve freedom. These people, anxious for their own farms, put pressure on the colonial government to expand westward into American Indian lands. They also became undesirable competitors to the already established planters.

Bacon's Rebellion was an indication that a labor force which could eventually challenge the authority of the planters was not desirable. Almost coincident with this demand for a different form of labor was a new supply. The slave trade that had formerly been controlled by the Dutch was now in the hands of the English. Thus, at a time when there was a demand for a more tractable labor force, the supply of African labor, which would be terrorized into subservience with, became available.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. What Was it Like to be an Indentured Servant?
2. Were There Different Classes of People in Virgina?
3. Relations Between Whites and American Indians
4. Position of Nathaniel Bacon and His Followers

Courtesy of the Bettmann Archives

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE AN INDENTURED SERVANT?

A. Objectives

1. Students will list the conditions for one indentured servant.

2. Students will infer the problems which might arise from indentured servitude.

3. Students will contrast indentured servitude with slavery.

B. Teacher Background Materials

Virginia planters used indentured servants as cheap sources of labor. For the term of their bondage these servants were virtually slaves. But people were willing to endure such servitude to escape the starvation and other harsh conditions that were the general lot of the European poor. Moreover, there was a promise of a better life if they survived their term. What they often found however was illness, hard work, and death.

People who completed their service went in search for free land on the borders of the colony. This led to interactions with the American Indians and to many conflicts over the use of the land. These conflicts resulted in people on the frontier calling for the elimination of American Indians in settled areas. The leader of the movement was Nathaniel Bacon. Governor Berkeley was in favor of a policy of tolerance and trade with the Indians. He resisted calling all Indians bad or good and would not endorse a policy of total removal of the American Indian populations beyond the white settled areas.

As pressures for land grew, the planters turned to sources of labor that would not result in large numbers of people requesting new land. The beginnings of the use of slaves as cheap labor was one result. This, of course, had tremendous implications for the future and made the Virginia colony different from the settlements in Massachusetts.

Teacher Instructions:

The day prior to reading the account of Bacon's burning of Jamestown, have students ask their parents if any of them have heard of Bacon's Rebellion. Chances are slight that any of them will have heard of it. After reading the account of Bacon's Rebellion and again at the end of the unit, speculate about why this event is not more widely remembered. Was it unimportant? Would it be important if it had not failed? How can understanding Bacon's Rebellion help us understand the present? There is a tendency to remember history's winners. Almost by definition failed rebellions, like other sorts of failure, drop from our collective memory. But this unit aspires to teach that even when people struggle and fail, an examination of their effort helps explain our past and informs our present. Students might also be asked to consider the rebellion from the point of view of American Indians.

C. Lesson Activities

1. Read the **DRAMATIC MOMENT** to students. It sets the stage for understanding the people involved in Bacon's Rebellion and the documents which describe the people in their society.

2. Distribute **DOCUMENT A**. Students will examine the document, a contract for an indentured servant. Ask students to review the strengths and weaknesses of looking at an original document. Is it reliable? Why or why not? Historians might have differences of opinion about the meaning of the document. In their examination, students will have different points of view and different interpretations.

   a. Ask students to identify the source of the document. It comes to us from the Middlesex County records and was a legal contract. Thus, it can be regarded as reliable. Have students speculate on why it would be reliable.

   b. The teacher may want to contrast the use of some original sources which might be more reliable than other sources. For example, the class might want to play telephone where one person is given a piece of information. This is whispered to each person in the class. The final member reveals the message and it is compared with the original. Students can see what happens to information as it is passed along orally. This type of information can be compared to the written record. Which might be more reliable? Why? Are all written records equally reliable?

   c. What do students notice about the document? Responses might include:

      - Spelling and punctuation is different
      - The way things are said is different than today
      - Some of the words and phrases need modern explanation (*imploy, master, workeing in the ground*).

d. The teacher should read the document to the students as they watch on an overhead projector or read along with the teacher. Phrases and words such as *freely, arival, imploy,* and *common workeing in the ground* should be discussed for their meaning.

e. Students could then meet in groups of two or three and list what they know about the society based on this document. All observations should be honored as long as they are accurate. It is from the accumulation of these observations that historians construct descriptions of earlier societies. The insights and inferences made from such observations provide variations in historical interpretations. It is the combination of new data combined with new interpretations of known information that creates the changes in our understanding of the past. Possible observations from students might include:

- People had servants.
- People had a free will and could choose.
- A person served for seven years.
- The servant is coming from some other place.
- Some people were masters.
- There must have been stores.
- There must have been farming.
- Some people would rather work in stores than farm.

f. At this point teachers can begin to encourage higher levels of thinking by asking students to infer information about the society based on this document. The discussions should center around the basis for an indentured servant system. Some of the questions might include:

- What is an indentured servant?
- How might a servant feel about the contract?
- What would a person gain in signing such a contract?
- What would happen at the end of seven years?
- What would happen if the servant didn't want to stay for seven years?
- What is the source and conditions for indentured servants before they arrive?
- What did people do when they had finished their indenture?
- How were people treated as indentured servants?
- Would you want to be an indentured servant?
- Suppose there were no indentured servants, what would the planters do for labor?
- Why would a person give up his or her freedom for seven years?
- Why would someone rather work in a store than a farm?
- How were indentured servants different from enslaved workers?

D. Evaluating The Lesson

A debate could be conducted with the question: *Is an indentured servant system good or bad?*

Students should list the merits and problems of indentured servitude. Students should take a position and develop an argument for or against this system.

A short speech by each person could involve every person in the room or a debate could be conducted with teams. (Students should be reminded that indentured servants were often trying to escape starvation and that the choice was not between bonded labor and wage labor

but between slave labor and bonded labor.)

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY INDENTURE CONTRACT
MIDDLESEX COUNTY ORDER BOOK, 1688

Roger Jones Servant to Mr. William Churchill Comes and acknowledges that hee is freely Willing to Serve his Master Seaven yeares from his Arival, The said Churchill promising that hee will imploy his Servant in the Stoar and other his occasions and not imploy him in Common workeing in the Ground.

Warren M. Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606-1689*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p. 135.

MODERN EQUIVALENT

Roger Jones has agreed to be the servant of William Churchill for seven years. William Churchill will use Roger Williams in store work and not on a farm.

LESSON TWO

WERE THERE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF PEOPLE IN VIRGINIA?

A. Objectives

1. Students will list the differences between a worker and a gentleman in Virginian society.

2. Students will speculate on the problems that might occur because of differences of social status in colonial society.

B. Teacher Background Materials

The Virginia colony in the seventeenth century was like the boom towns of the California and Alaska gold rushes. Until the late seventeenth century, it was a largely male society which existed principally to make fortunes for the individual members. In the case of Virginia the wealth they were pursuing was achieved by growing tobacco.

In the seventeenth century paper money was not generally accepted as currency; usually money was either gold or silver. However, coins of all sorts were scarce in Virginia. Tobacco thus was not only the cash crop of Virginia, it was Virginia's cash and functioned as the main medium of exchange.

The Virginia colony was a highly stratified society. Although the distinctions between classes were pronounced, the fact that there were laws to enforce those distinctions as well as violators of those laws indicates that these distinctions were resented by some and were a source of continuing tensions.

Teacher Instructions:

This lesson is intended to demonstrate analytical techniques used by historians as well as providing students with some sense of the class distinctions which existed in seventeenth century Virginia. Students will act as detectives, sifting through this document, to gain insight into the past.

C. Lesson Activities

1. Pass out **DOCUMENT B**. Ask the class to identify the source of the document. They should also be asked to speculate on how reliable such a document would be. Since the document was taken from York County records, historians consider it reliable. The document was composed by someone at the trial whose purpose was to make an accurate record of the proceedings. Teachers might want to contrast this with other sources of information which may not be as reliable. For instance, ask someone to describe the last World Series game or a dad asking his daughter, who is watching TV, if her homework is done and her room cleaned up.

   a. What do students notice about the document? Their responses might include:

      - Spelling of words is different.
      - Capitalization and punctuation is different.

   b. Read the document and see what it tells us about Virginia in 1674. Students might read along with the teacher or read in partners. The following is

a list of some of the things to be gleaned from this document. Possible observations from students might include:

- There were courts and laws, which not everyone obeyed.
- There were horse races.
- Tobacco was worth money.
- Tobacco was used as money.
- Tobacco was kept in casks (barrels).
- There were different ways of addressing people—some were called mister, but not everyone.
- There were tailors (people who made clothes).
- There were gentlemen.
- Laborers were not allowed to race horses.
- Not everyone obeyed this law.

c. At this point teachers can encourage higher level thinking on the parts of students. From the above observations students may be able to make some further inferences about Virginia, the monetary system, and the social system. Teachers can get to these insights by asking questions such as:

- How is tobacco used?
- Why is tobacco used as money?
- Where does all of the tobacco come from?
- Why do they have so much tobacco?
- Why is Mathew Slader called mister but not James Bullock?
- What does this tell us about the differences between a gentleman and a laborer?
- Is money the only distinction between those who are gentlemen, and those who are not?
- Why did this society feel the need for such a law?

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- Did everyone accept the distinctions in this stratified society?
- How do you think James Bullock felt about being fined?
- How do you think Mathew Slader felt about this law?

D. Evaluating The Lesson

After students have made inferences about Virginian society, divide the class into pairs. Have them compose a conversation between James Bullock, or some fictional laborer, and Mathew Slader, or some fictional gentleman. The conversation might be to arrange the horse race or it can be on any other matter, but it should demonstrate the difference between the two classes and possibly even the resentment felt by the lower class of people. Students might do this as a written or an oral exercise.

E. Extended Activity

Students should try to arrange by social and legal status slaves, servants, freemen, and gentlemen. They will also speculate where women would fit in this hierarchy. Since they have not had any information on women, tell them that women could not vote or own property after marriage, and their word carried less weight in a court.

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STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B

YORK COUNTY COURT JUDGEMENT AGAINST JAMES BULLOCK

Transcript:

York County Court June 11, 1674

James Bullock a Taylor having made a race for his Mare with a horse belonging to mr. Mathew Slader for two thousand pounds of tobacco and Caske it being contrary to Law for a Labourer to make a race being a Sport only for Gentlemen is fined for the same one hundred pounds of tobacco and caske.

York County Order Book, 1672-1694, 85.

Modern Equivalent:

James Bullock, a tailor, and Mr. Mathew Slader, a gentleman, had a horse race where they each bet two thousand pounds of tobacco and the barrels needed to hold the tobacco. Since it is against the law for a worker to race horses, James Bullock is fined one hundred pounds of tobacco and the barrel needed to hold the tobacco.

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RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WHITES AND THE AMERICAN INDIANS

A. Objectives

1. Students will learn that Indians were treated as lesser peoples in Virginia society.

2. Students will list the probable feelings that both whites and Indians had toward each other.

B. Teacher Background Materials

There were many points of view and conflicts between the American Indians and white settlers. Governor Berkeley and his fellow leaders wanted to limit the areas of white settlement and conducted a very lucrative trade with the Indians. They felt that both groups could live peacefully in the same area. Governor Berkeley differentiated between hostile and friendly Indians.

Many indentured servants, once free, went to the edges of settlements to gain land. This pressure for land by white settlers pushed the American Indians farther and farther away from their own settled areas. American Indians had different concepts of land ownership and believed that it existed for the common benefit. The pressure for land and opposing belief systems brought conflict in overlapping settlements on the frontier.

Bacon and his followers opposed Berkeley's Indian policy and were for eliminating all Indians from settlement areas. They vented their rage and frustration on Indians forcing the governor into a stand off.

This difference led to conflict between Governor Berkeley and Bacon and his followers and laid the foundation for Bacon's rebellion.

Teacher Instructions:

This lesson is intended to give students experiences in looking at replicas of original documents and using analytic skills in classifying the feelings and actions of whites and Indians in Virginia society. Students will act as detectives as they sift through this document to understand some of the underlying conflicts in that society.

C. Lesson Activities

1. Pass out **DOCUMENT C**. Tell the students about the source of the document. It was a part of the official records of the Stafford County court. Ask students to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of looking at original documents—a good source for firsthand information but often biased by the persons who wrote them. What would be the opinion of the American Indians today if they could see the record? What would be the opinion of the whites? Prepare a chart of positive and negative points in using original documents for the class to use.

   a. Have students list what they notice about the document. Their responses might include:

      - Spelling of words is different.
      - Capitalization and punctuation are different.

b. Have students work in groups of two or three. One person reads the passage to the others. The group then lists all of the things they can infer from the passage. Have them look at the transcripts and the modern equivalent to see if they agree after they have reviewed the original document.

It is important to accept every observation at this point as long as the group can justify why they listed it. This is important because historians have discussions about the interpretations of original documents based upon their observations. By having discussions about their inferences, students can see the real work of historians.

Possible observations which might come from group work:

- White settlers made laws they expected Indians to obey.
- Indians hunted by burning woods.
- The English were only thinking about themselves.
- There is a different system of values between whites and American Indians.
- The Indians were losing their land.
- Indians were getting less land to hunt on.
- Indians were on the land before settlers.
- A court had forbidden Indians to hunt in English territory.
- White settlers did not like the way Indians hunted.
- White settlers thought burning the woods was dangerous to people.

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c. At this step teachers can encourage higher levels of thinking by students. From their observations students can be encouraged to broaden their view of colonial life. They can see the problems from at least two points of view with some students seeing the middle ground. This document can help students understand the underlying problem for colonial society—the distribution and use of land. Some of the following questions can help guide students' thinking.

- Were judges unfair to the American Indians?
- What would happen to the Indians if they couldn't hunt in their traditional way?
- Why did the settlers want to limit Indian hunting?
- What would the reaction of the Indians be to this restriction of hunting?
- Why did the Indians do what they did in hunting?
- What is the view of ownership and use of land by both whites and American Indians?
- What position would settlers and Indians take in the hunting issue?
- Was there a middle ground?
- If this kind of interaction was common, what might be the possible outcomes?

D. Evaluating the Lesson

After students have listed the differences between the white settlers and the American Indians on charts, have students select a side to argue. Students could choose to be American Indians, older settlers already established, or new settlers desiring land. Conduct a debate for colonial policy. One side would argue to move the Indians away from white settlement areas. A second side

could argue for the Indians' belief in the joint ownership and use of land, concluding that settlers and Indians could live side by side. A third side could use Governor Berkeley's point of view that the trade with Indians was lucrative and provided a basis for mutual acceptance on the part of both societies.

After the debate, students might be asked to summarize the points presented and then take their own position, based on the arguments presented during the debate.

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STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT C

STAFFORD COURT FORBIDS INDIANS TO HUNT IN SETTLED AREAS, 1664

Transcript:

Whereas many sad Accidents have happen'd by the Indians hunting in the Woods as by firing the same and that Particular Persons doe harber them Then the Court doth Order that noe Indian by any person whatsoever shall be suffer'd to hunt in any parte of the English habitation such only excepted as by publique Order are Allowed to find out the residue of the Murtherers on the forfiture of 500 li. Tobacco and Cask and it is further Order'd that the Grand Jury present all such offenders to be prosecuted accordingly.

Stafford County Order Book, 1664-1668, 12.

Modern Equivalent of Transcript:

Many sad accidents have happened because the Indians have set the woods on fire to capture animals.

The court forbids any Indian from hunting in an area occupied by English settlers.

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POSITION OF NATHANIEL BACON AND HIS FOLLOWERS

A. Objectives

1. Students will state the problems that people in the frontier settlements thought they had with the Indians.

2. Students will contrast the position of the settlers with those of Governor Berkeley.

3. Students will draw conclusions about the reasons for Bacon's Rebellion.

B. Teacher Background Materials

This document has been edited for elementary school children. The essence of the discussion should focus on the white people's anger and perception that they had a terrible problem. White settlers did not respect American Indian rights. In part the settlers were greedy for land. But they also did not recognize the American Indians as being equal to Europeans. Consequently, they did not understand that Indians might regard them as invaders and resist them. The settlers' solution to the Indian "problem" was to request help from the Governor to eliminate all Indians from settler areas.

Governor Berkeley took a more reasonable position. He felt that Indians and settlers could get along and that only Indians who caused problems should be punished.

This was the heart of Bacon's Rebellion. Nathaniel Bacon felt as the settlers did and since he was a part of the governing class of planters, his voice as a leader was powerful. The settlers turned to him to organize and lead

groups to eliminate the Indians from settled areas. This strong group of people turned against the government in Jamestown when they concluded that the government was not representing their point of view about Indian relations. At one point, they forced Governor Berkeley to leave Jamestown. At another, they burned many of the buildings.

The discussion can deal with the efforts of people to get their government to help with issues they feel are important and what can happen when government leaders are not perceived as helpful.

Teacher Instructions

Begin by examining **DOCUMENT D**, a map showing Jamestown and the immediate vicinity of Bacon's Rebellion. This will give students a sense of the relatively small geographic area in which the rebellion occurred. Students will then examine the point of view of the settlers and review the position of Governor Berkeley about the American Indians. With the teacher's help, students can infer the probable outcomes from the disagreement.

C. Lesson Activities

1. Look at a classroom map of the United States and locate Virginia and Jamestown. Pass out **DOCUMENT D**. Look at the legend and estimate the distances from Jamestown to the outer limits of the settlements. The approximate limit is forty miles. Compare this with the area of the city where the students in the class live currently. Ask students about the area around Jamestown. It includes

swamps, rivers, and bays. Also remind them that the lack of modern roads made travel more difficult.

2. Ask students to look at **DOCUMENT E**. The document was a petition sent to Governor Berkeley in the spring of 1676 and is now kept in Virginia's state archives. Would the frontier settlers have reasons for exaggerating or even lying about Indian savagery?

   a. Have students list what they notice about the document.

   b. Read the document to the class. have students read along with their own copies. By reading dramatically, you can convey the feeling the people might have had as they wrote to their governor. Then have students check the transcript to see that they have the message. Explain the use of ellipses—that there are parts missing from the original. Then look at the modern equivalent. The teacher might have students infer the modern equivalent and then check with the one provided in the lesson plan.

   c. Have the students prepare charts that describe the problem and the feelings of the settlers. The charts might include:

      - There are complaints that there is no help.
      - The Indians are killing white settlers.
      - The Indians are torturing captives.
      - White settlers are being burned.
      - White settlers feel helpless and want help.
      - White settlers want to take arms and kill Indians.
      - White settlers feel threatened for their lives.
      - White settlers want permission to kill Indians.

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d. Higher levels of thinking should be encouraged once all observations have been made. Students can be encouraged to infer what settlers felt on the frontier and what their lives were like. The situation seems very dangerous to them. With the feeling from this petition, the students can get a sense that the people felt that Governor Berkeley was not helping and that they wanted to do something about it. The right of a people to petition the government and to get help when it is needed is a theme throughout our history. The teacher can guide this thinking with questions such as the following:

- Do we know the American Indians were actually doing these things?
- Did the white settlers have any reason to exaggerate Indian activities?
- Why would the Indians attack these settlers?
- What were the differences between the classes in white or English settlers?
- What was life like for settlers?
- What problems did they face?
- What were relations like between the Indians and the settlers?
- Recall Governor Berkeley's position about Indians and compare it with the settlers?
- What problems might this disagreement cause?
- What can happen when a group of people take arms and defend themselves against another group?
- If many people feel the government is not protecting their rights, what might happen?

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D. Concluding Activity

Arrange the class in groups of five to six students. Review the problem presented in the lesson. Have the groups select a Governor and a Nathaniel Bacon. Have them prepare dialogue and actions that reflect the disagreement. Each group should have an opportunity to present their play—five minutes—to the group and receive and evaluation for accuracy.

E. Alternative Concluding Activity

Jamestown: People, Land, and the Grim Reaper—This game is intended to show students how the gradually increasing population of free white settlers in Jamestown led to tensions with the Indians.

1. Equipment:

Six school lunch milk containers with tops removed labeled one to six; blue chits of paper (indicating survival); red chits of paper (indicating death); and a basketball court or other large open area.

Prepare cartons one through six by filling them with the following:

1) 6 Red Chits 3 Blue Chits
2) 5 Red Chits 4 Blue Chits
3) 4 Red Chits 5 Blue Chits
4) 4 Red Chits 5 Blue Chits
5) 3 Red Chits 6 Blue Chits
6) 3 Red Chits 6 Blue Chits

If more turns are needed, continue turns with 2 red and 7 blue chits.

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2. Object:

This game will never replace kickball, but it will help students to visually understand how the declining mortality rate in Jamestown eventually affected American Indian-white relations. Students see how declining mortality rates led to more free men who in turn put pressure on the colony to take Indian land. Servants try to gain their freedom by accumulating three blue chits indicating their survival for three years. For the first four or five rounds such survival should be unlikely, but in round six or perhaps in the round after there should be as many freemen as there are Indians or owners. Ambitious teachers could also use this as part of a math lesson on probability.

3. Warnings and Cautions:

Teachers might want to vary the game by allowing students to role play their particular parts. This should probably not be attempted until a second or third trial of the game. Because of the time required to put the right number of colored pieces of paper in each milk carton, teachers might do this as an opening P.E. activity for a few days. The first day explain the rules and run through it once. The next day explain the concept after the students have played it. Finally, play the game allowing students to act out their parts.

4. Procedure:

a. Begin by choosing five American Indians, three plantation owners, and six servants. The Indians will have to be patient because their role is static.

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b. Space the Indians around half the basketball court.

c. Divide the other half of the court into three parts, representing three tobacco plantations. Have owners take their place with two servants apiece.

d. Have each colonist take a chit of paper from the container labeled "One." You (the teacher) are the grim reaper. After everyone has their chits, take the red chits back and lead the victims of swamp fever and bloody flux off the court. If a plantation owner dies, one of his or her servants "inherits" the plantation and becomes free. This ends the first year; have students count the dead.

e. Have six new servants replace the dead settlers. Pass out chits from the second carton. Escort off the dead taking their chits.

f. Replace the dead settlers with new servants and begin round three. There should always be three plantation owners, who each have two servants, at the beginning of each round. By the end of round three a servant may have achieved freedom by collecting three blue chits. When a servant becomes free he or she goes to the midline of the basketball court and looks longingly at the half court occupied by Indians.

g. Continue play until there are at least as many free people along the line as there are plantation owners. This replicates the point at which Bacon's rebellion occurred and ends the game. Since this is a game take this opportunity to ask the students what the free people should do. The freed servants want land but, as the students should see, all the land belongs to someone.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT D

THE AREA OF BACON'S REBELLION, 1676

The Area of Bacon's Rebellion, 1676 from The Georgeac and the Rebel, p. xii

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STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT E

FRONTIER PLANTERS PETITION GOVERNOR BERKELEY TO COMMISSION VOLUNTEERS AGAINST THE INDIANS, CIRCA SPRING 1676

Transcript:

...The Humble petition of the poore distressed subjects in the upper parts of James River in verginia Humbly Complain that the Indians hath allready most barberously and Inhumanly taken and Murdered severall of our bretheren and put them to most cruell torture by burning of them alive and by cruell torturing of them which makes our harts Ready to bleed to heare and wee the poore subjects are in dayly dandger of loosing our lives by the Heathen in soe much that wee are all afraid of going about our demesticall affaires. Wherefore we Most Humbly request that your gracious Honor would be pleased to grant us a Committion and to make choice of Commitioned Officers to lead this party now redy to takes armes in defence of our lives and estates...

C.O. I/36, vol. 139, Public Record Office

Modern Equivalent of Transcript:

People in the settlements of the upper James River request help from Governor Berkeley and permission to do away with the Indians in the immediate area. They feel that the Indians are dangerous to their society.

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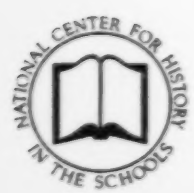

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